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AUTHOR Clubb, Jerome M.; Traugott, Michael W.
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ABSTRACT

While the emphasis in much recent research has been essentially on urban concerns, there are very substantial empirical data resources which are available for the study of nonmetropolitan social, political, and economic phenomenon. The sources of computer-readable data relevant to investigation of nonmetropolitan phenomena can be grouped into three "rather crude" categories: social science data archives and other similar facilities dedicated to the organization, processing, preservation, and dissemination of computer-readable data for research and instruction in the social sciences; governmental offices and agencies at all levels which collect and sometimes disseminate relevant computer-readable data; and a disparate category of individual researchers who have collected data and are sometimes willing to supply copies to others, as well as private profit and not-for-profit organizations which collect and in some cases supply data resources. Using a three-category scheme for the classification of available data (aggregate demographic data, information from administrative records, and individual-level data from surveys), a number of data sources are discussed in terms of their characteristics and the kind of data available from them. An appendix lists 28 archival sources for computer-readable data on nonmetropolitan communities in the United States and Canada. (BE)

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DATA RESOURCES FOR COMMUNITY STUDIES:

THE UNITED STATES

Jerome M. Clubb

Michael W. Traugott

Center for Political Studies
and
Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research
Institute for Social Research
The University of Michigan
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

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ARCHIVAL DATA RESOURCES FOR THE STUDY OF NONMETROPOLITAN AREAS: THE UNITED STATES

The emphasis in much recent research upon essentially urban concerns and the distressing tendency in many research and data collection designs to neglect contextual factors might lead to the conclusion that empirical data relevant to nonurban phenomena have been neglected. In fact most major data collection efforts--whether conducted by social scientists in the pursuit of specific research goals or by governments or other organizations in the course of routine administrative policy development or commercial activities--span both metropolitan and nonmetropolitan areas and populations. It is probably the case that relatively fewer large scale community studies, such as the continuing Detroit Area Studies conducted by the Survey Research Center of The University of Michigan, focus upon nonmetropolitan areas rather than upon areas of major population concentration. It is also likely that relatively fewer social scientific data collection efforts have focused upon specifically rural and nonmetropolitan economic pursuits and social processes. Nevertheless, there are very substantial empirical data resources which are available for the study of nonmetropolitan social, political, and economic phenomenan. This paper is devoted to discussion of the range of available data resources and to identification of the major agencies and organizations from which they may be obtained.

The collection of data pertinent to nonmetropolitan areas has not been neglected by the various levels of government. Indeed, in the United States, federal agencies and state and local governments constitute a

vast storehouse of relevant empirical data. No doubt less effort has been devoted by major national data repositories and archives and by governmental agencies to publicizing these data resources and to making them generally available in readily accessible and usable form. But if that is the case, it is likely that relative neglect has been in significant measure a product of the failure of students of nonmetropolitan phenomena to make their data needs and interests known, to adequately support the data dissemination activities of data repositories and governmental agencies, and to act in concerted fashion to influence the data collection and dissemination policies of those organizations.

The abundance and diversity of relevant data resources is such as to preclude anything approaching a comprehensive survey. The advent of computer technology and the increasingly ubiquitous use of these devices for the varied purposes of information management, storage and analysis has provided a massive stimulus to data gathering and record keeping. Thus even a listing and brief description of available computer-readable data collections, to which we will limit our attention, that are directly or indirectly relevant to the study of nonmetropolitan areas would constitute a catalogue of literally immense proportions. The effort would itself involve a major research task--one beyond both our own capacities and the purposes of the present paper. The difficulties confronted in constructing a similar catalogue of the sources of relevant computer-readable data would be only moderately less severe. When we recall only the numerous offices and agencies of the Department of Health, Education and Welfare that collect relevant data and from which computer-readable

data can sometimes be obtained, we can begin to recognize both the large number and the wide diversity of sources of relevant data. It is only possible here to suggest a very crude classification of relevant data and data sources. In this way the range of available data resources can be illustrated, avenues for access to relevant data briefly indicated, and problems and opportunities for data acquisition cursorily explored.

For present purposes, we will employ a somewhat crude three-category scheme for the classification of available data--aggregate demographic data, information from administrative records, and individual-level data from surveys. By aggregate data we mean the systematic collection of information on the demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the population which are made available for basic geographical or geopolitical units of analysis. These data are typified by information from the United States Census of Population and Housing which are made available for states, counties, and minor civil divisions of various sizes. The second category of data includes information from or about agencies, institutions, facilities, or establishments. The information may be about employment, expenditures, services, and the impact and incidence of participation in governmental programs. The units of analysis may be the governmental units themselves or the agencies or institutions which can be further identified by their location within a geographical unit or governmental jurisdiction. The third category of data encompasses information collected for individuals, including personal social, economic, and demographic characteristics, as well as information about attitudes, opinions, and behavior. These data are

frequently collected through sample surveys conducted by a variety of agencies and institutions, including academic researchers, commercial organizations, and governmental bureaus. The range of available data in each of these three categories is literally immense; in what follows we will consider only those data collections that are at least relatively accessible in computer-readable form.

The sources of computer-readable data relevant to investigation of nonmetropolitan phenomena can also be grouped into three rather crude categories. The first of these includes social science data archives and other similar facilities dedicated to the organization, processing, preservation and dissemination of computer-readable data for research and instruction in the social scieces. There is a small number of such organizations providing services to a national constituency, but a relatively large number providing local or regional services. A second category is composed of governmental offices and agencies at all levels which collect and sometimes disseminate relevant computer-readable data. A third category is even more disparate and includes individual researchers who have collected data and are sometimes willing to supply copies to others, as well as private profit and not-for-profit organizations which collect and in some cases supply data resources.

DATA SOURCES

As may be apparent, the preceding classification of sources of computer-readable data relevant to social scientific inquiry tends to rank the various sources in terms of degree of accessibility and convenience of access to the data which they provide. Hence limited further

discussion of each category is required. The past two decades have witnessed the appearance in the United States, Canada and other nations of a substantial number of data organizations variously referred to as social science data archives, data banks, data laboratories, data services and the like. More recently, a number of data organizations--often quite specialized in terms of substantive focus, clienteles and functions--have appeared in the private and governmental sectors. Academic data organizations range from a small number of nationally oriented "general purpose" archives through more specialized organizations concerned primarily with particular geographical regions or substantive areas of inquiry to data services and laboratories whose operations are largely or exclusively limited to a local college or university community.

In general, these organizations include among their functions preservation and dissemination of computer-readable collections of research data, provision of varying forms of technical assistance to social scientists in the use of computer-readable social science data, and conversion of data collections to standard, well-documented and readily usable form. Data of broad research value are obtained from individual researchers or research groups who have collected them in the course of research applications, from governmental agencies, or from other sources. Although practices vary from one data organization to the other, substantial effort is frequently devoted to eliminating errors, discrepancies and technical idiosyncracies and to preparing supporting information that explains such matters as the study design and sampling frame, documents uncorrectable discrepancies, and describes technical characteristics. In many instances these organizations have the capacity to supply

data in forms compatible with the technical requirements of diverse hardware and software systems. Hence the researcher can often receive from these organizations "clean" and well-documented data that are suitable for analysis and manipulation with at most limited additional processing. In some cases the functions of such data organizations also include provision of training in empirical methods of social research and in aspects of computer technology, assistance and consultation in computer applications, dissemination of computer software systems, development and dissemination of data-based instructional materials for the social sciences, and "clearing house" services to aid social scientists in identifying relevant data collections and to provide information as to on-going research.

Here again, it would be impossible to describe each of these many organizations in detail; their number and diversity is too great. However, an appendix to this paper provides a limited and partial listing of such organizations--including those in the private and governmental as well as the academic sectors--that include in their holdings data relevant to the investigation of nonmetropolitan phenomena and which provide services beyond purely local consitutencies. Several of these numerous organizations do merit particular attention since they constitute social scientific resources of major importance.

In the United States, two academically based and nationally oriented, general purpose data archives are of special interest: The Roper Public Opinion Research Center--now located jointly at the University of Connecticut, Yale University and Williams College--and the Inter-

university Consortium for Political and Social Research with headquarters and central staff located in the Institute for Social Research of The University of Michigan. The Roper Center contains the largest collection of data from sample surveys in the world. The Center's holdings include data from thousands of surveys conducted by well over 100 commercial and academic survey units--including the Gallup Organizations and its affiliates, the National Opinion Research Center and numerous others--in more than sixty nations. These holdings, moreover, span virtually the entire period of sample survey research, with the oldest data files dating from 1936, and are of incomparable value for the study of popular attitudes. The magnitude of its holdings has prevented the Center from "cleaning" and processing every survey to standard form. Thus data acquired from this source sometimes require substantial additional processing before analytic applications can be carried out. On the other hand, the Roper Center also disseminates a very large number of fully cleaned data collections which can be immediately used with at most limited additional processing. Moreover, the Roper Center has the capacity to clean and convert its data holdings to fully usable form on request. The Roper Center is supported in part by annual fees paid by member colleges, universities and other organizations through the International Survey Library Association. Individuals at these organizations have free or inexpensive access to Center data holdings. All data, however, are also available at a charge to individuals at other institutions.

The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research, a second nationally oriented data archive, is a membership based organi-

zation of over 220 colleges and universities in the United States and a dozen or more other nations. The Consortium holdings include data from surveys, primarily academic, conducted in the United States and numerous other nations. Consortium holdings, however, are not limited to data collected through sample surveys but include as well data in each of the other categories mentioned above. As an example of these diverse data holdings, the Consortium maintains extensive computer-readable files of social, economic and demographic data at the county and state level originally collected through the United States Censuses beginning in 1790; aggregate returns at the county level for elections to the offices of President, Governor, and United States Senator and Representative since 1788; comprehensive roll call voting records for the United States Congress from 1789 to the present; data from the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A. surveys of churches and church membership conducted in 1952 and 1972; and extensive data files originally collected by such agencies of the federal government as the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, the National Center for Health Statistics, and the Social Security Administration. In its data acquisitions the Consortium has tended to be relatively selective. In general only data are acquired that external advisory committees composed of informed scholars have judged to be of high quality and great research value. As a consequence considerable energy can be devoted by the Consortium staff to the work of cleaning and documentation of these data files, and readily-usable data can typically be supplied in technical forms suited to the requirements of most computational systems.

The activities of the Consortium are not limited to processing and dissemination of social scientific data nor are the data holdings limited to materials for the United States. Rather Consortium holdings include data in each of the categories indicated above and relevant to a variety of nations. In addition to its archival activities, the Consortium maintains an annual summer training program in quantitative methods of social research. Through the training program, graduate students and more senior scholars can gain an introduction to basic research methods or participate in advanced seminars devoted to the most recent developments in research methodology. The Consortium also disseminates a major computer software system (OSIRIS III) which was developed at the Institute for Social Research of the University of Michigan and which provides a wide range of capabilities for the management and analysis of social scientific data. Like the Roper Center, the Consortium activities are primarily supported by the annual fees paid by the affiliated institutions. Individuals at those institutions have access to the data holdings, expect in a few special cases, without charge beyond the annual institutional fee. All data holdings, however, are considered to be "in the public domain" and are also available at a charge to individuals at other institutions.[1]

[1] While this paper is devoted primarily to the availability of data for the United States, two nationally oriented Canadian data organizations also require comment. The Institute for Behavioral Research at York University processes, maintains and disseminates extensive arrays of data from numerous sample surveys, the Canadian national censuses, and a variety of other sources. The Institute also maintains and provides access to a computer-based bibliographic search capability which references numerous scholarly periodicals published in Canada, the United States and other nations. Although not a data archive, the Canadian Clearing House for the Social Sciences systematically compiles and maintains information on files of Canadian data available for social scientific research. A catalogue of data files is published periodically and an inquiry addressed to the Clearing House will elicit information as to the availability and condition of data files relevant to particular areas of research concern.

Various other academic data organizations also require mention which are in some cases more specialized in terms of substantive orientation, function and clientele than those mentioned above. Among these are the Data and Program Library Service at the University of Wisconsin which includes in its holdings survey materials, extended economic and demographic time series, census data, and other computer-readable materials. The Louis Harris Political Data Center at the University of North Carolina is the central dissemination point for data collected by Louis Harris and Associates, as well as data from other sources. The Laboratory for Political Research at the University of Iowa has holdings of survey data including a number of unique data collections relevant to the immediate area. The International Data Library and Reference Service in the Survey Research Center of the University of California, Berkeley, has extensive data holdings that tend to focus upon Latin America, other developing nations, and the state of California.

It is impossible to provide here a detailed indication of the data holdings of these organizations. Suffice it to say that each, and particularly the nationally oriented data archives, include in their holdings extensive arrays of empirical computer-readable data relevant to the study of non-metropolitan areas. Each of these organizations maintains an up-to-date catalogue or list of data holdings which can be obtained on request (an appendix gives the addresses of these and other similar organizations). Moreover, a letter or telephone call will elicit information as to whether current holdings include materials relevant to particular research interests and usually suggestions as to alternative sources of relevant data.

Data organizations such as those described above developed to meet the needs of social scientists whose research and instruction involves

as central elements the use of extensive arrays of empirical data and advanced computer technology. Such organizations serve the value of scientific replication and they rest upon, as a key premise, the fact that data originally collected for particular research, administrative or other purposes usually have research and instructional value much beyond the original purposes for which they were collected. Such organizations were in most cases initially formed to conserve and disseminate to others research data collected by individual scholars or groups in the course of research applications. However, the functions of data organizations were early extended to include, in some cases, original data collection, and their holdings were expanded to include data initially collected by governmental agencies as well. Difficulties of access by academic social scientists and others to these resources made it necessary to extend the purview of many data organizations to include materials of this sort. Hence a sizeable portion of the data holdings of many of these organizations comprises administrative and other data originally collected by governmental agencies.

In recent years, moreover, a number of profit and not-for-profit organizations have appeared which serve primarily as intermediary processing and dissemination mechanisms for data originally produced by the federal government. Among these, National DUALabs, Inc. was originally formed to provide effective and lower cost access to the voluminous computer-readable data files produced by the 1970 census. The files of 1970 census data held and disseminated by many of the data organizations indicated above were obtained through the DUALabs intermediary. Subsequently, DUALabs has extended its operations to include other categories

of federal data and it has become a resource of considerable importance to the social scientific community. Other similar organizations include the social and economic data base developed at Oak Ridge National Laboratories, originally based upon 1970 Census materials but now including many other data files as well. A major private corporation providing a wide range of data services and data files is Westat Research, Inc. They are responsible for the development of a number of data files for market research purposes which also have a general utility for social scientists interested in the study of nonmetropolitan areas.

As we have suggested above, governmental agencies constitute incomparably rich sources of empirical data for virtually all aspects of social scientific inquiry. The federal government expends vast sums on more or less specialized data collection efforts of relevance to social scientific inquiry--the data collection efforts of the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare alone are estimated as in excess of one billion dollars annually--and an immense volume of data is routinely collected through the conduct of government, through a wide variety of monitoring activities and through administration of governmental programs. A variety of federal agencies also make computer-readable data files generally available to social scientists including, to mention only the most obvious, the Bureau of the Census through its Data User Services Division, the Bureau of Labor Statistics, the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration, the National Center for Health Statistics, and the National Center for Educational Statistics.

Yet the social scientists who attempt to acquire relevant data resources from federal agencies often encounter grave difficulties. Per-

haps the most frustrating of the difficulties confronted by researchers who seek to employ federally collected data lies in learning of the availability of relevant files and in identifying the appropriate modes of access to them. Moreover, available data files are often large in terms of the numbers of variables and units of analysis, complex in structure, poorly documented, and frequently supplied in technically idiosyncratic formats. Hence the researcher must often carry out extensive processing to reorganize, subset and otherwise restructure data files before analytical work can begin. The costs of acquiring federal data files vary widely, but are often superficially low. On the other hand, because of the manner in which data files are organized the researcher must often "over purchase" and bear the cost of acquiring substantially more data than is actually needed for the particular research application. When costs of over purchase are added to the reprocessing costs of subsetting and converting data to usable form, the financial and other burdens confronted in utilizing federally collected data can become prohibitive for all but the best funded individual scholar or research group.

It is, of course, to overcome these obstacles that various data organizations have assumed an intermediary role where dissemination of federally collected data is concerned. Such organizations sometimes serve, in effect, as "buyers' cooperatives," paying the costs of initial acquisition, reprocessing the data file, providing subsetting capabilities and making available to their constituents the precise data required in fully usable form at lower or no cost. Indeed, a number of federal agencies now commission data organizations to carry out these intermediary functions and provide financial support for the conduct of those

activities.

And promising developments have also occurred within the federal government itself. In recent years various federal agencies have significantly improved their capacity to supply data in more usable form out of recognition of the needs and interests of social scientist. In the case of the Bureau of the Census, for example, individuals have gained valuable data resources in more usable form through the establishment of a Data User Services Division. The formation of the National Technical Information Service elsewhere in the Department of Commerce constitutes a partially successful effort to provide a central facility through which information about available federal data collections can be obtained. From a somewhat different perspective, the formation of the Machine-Readable Archives Branch of the National Archives and Records Service constitutes a more promising development. The Machine-Readable Archives Division functions, as its names implies, to collect, conserve, and make available the machine-readable records of the federal government as they are adjudges suitable for conservation. As such, the creation of this unit reflects belated and, as yet, inadequate recognition by the National Archives of its responsibility to conserve and provide acccess to the computer-readable records of the nation as well as to conventional paper records.[2]

The Machine-Readable Archives Division promises to become in the future an important resource for social scientists. At present, however,

[2]The analogous organization in Canada is the Machine Readable Archives, Public Archives Canada. Their complete address may be found in the appendix.

the level of funding is too low to allow the Machine-Readable Archives Division to even acquire the records within its area of responsibility, much less to process to usable form those computer-readable records that are acquired. Still other promising developments could also be noted. But at this writing, avenues of access to federally collected data remain chaotic and problematic, and the various intermediary organizations described above still constitute the most effective and convenient means for the social scientist to gain access to these rich data resources.

If the data access picture is chaotic at the national level, chaos is compounded by confusion at the state and local levels of government. State and local governments, of course, also produce extensive data bearing upon the conduct of government, provision of services, availability of social facilities, and the activities, conditions and quality of life of their populations. At both the state and local levels, computational equipment is widely employed to record, manage and use this information. The accessibility of such information varies widely, but few if any states or other jurisdictions provide anything approaching effective access to these data resources. Fortunately, the various monitoring and data collection efforts--perhaps best illustrated by the quinquennial Census of Governments conducted by the Bureau of the Census--provide a means by which at least partial data bearing upon these jurisdictions and their activities can be gained.

We have touched briefly above on three categories of organizational sources of empirical data for social scientific inquiry. There are also a variety of commercial organizations which routinely collect and preserve data for business purposes which are also of value for a wide variety of other research applications. Standard and Poor's routinely collects data on local government finances and credit ratings, for example, while the R.L. Polk Company maintains several large data files in conjunction with its production of city directories. Such data collections, however, are proprietary; and generalized access to them is usually not available. Even so, the enterprising social scientist can frequently arrange access to segments of such data files on an individual basis.

Many of the numerous "public interest groups" also constitute possible sources of relevant data. The International City Management Association, for example, compiles computer-readable data on finances, personnel, facilities, and other resources in government for municipalities or large and small size. Other examples of public interest groups that constitute potential sources of usable data include the National Association of Counties and the Council of State Governments, which also have data on governmental units, as well as organizations such as the National Fire Protection Association or the Police Foundation which maintain data on personnel, facilities, and services in the relevant administrative jurisdictions.

Here again, the data holdings of such orgainzations can best be described as differentially available. For the most part such organiza-

tions do not provide generalized access to data resources but function instead to serve the needs of their own constituencies. But as in the case of commerical organizations, the individual scholar or research group can frequently gain access to these resources for particular research purposes. Costs of access and difficulties of data use, however, usually tend to be greater than where the data organizations discussed above are concerned, because these data resources are generally maintained for internal use rather than for dissemination to others.

DATA RESOURCES

In the preceding pages we have briefly considered some of the most important organizational sources of computer-readable data for social scientific inquiry with, however, no pretense to exhaustiveness. The holdings of these organizations include data collections relevant to virtually all disciplines and areas of social research and which bear upon communities and jurisdictions of all sizes and population densities. In general, academic data organizations tend to supply data in the most usable, best documented and technically most convenient forms. They also tend to provide the lowest cost access to data. Indeed, many of these organizations provide access to local communities of social scientists without cost while the nationally oriented academic data archives provide a very large member community with access to data and other resources at very low or no cost beyond annual affiliation fees. The policies and practices of organizational data sources in the governmental and private sectors vary widely. However, data obtained from these sources tend--again in general--to be more costly and less convenient to use while access is also often less easy and dependable.

A brief discussion of organizational data sources does not, of course, suffice to suggest either the volume or character of the rich computer-readable research data that are now available. In the following pages a number of specific data collections and categories

of data are briefly discussed. The purpose of the discussion is essentially illustrative and particular emphasis is placed upon opportunities for longitudinal investigation of community change and upon problems encountered in the acquisition and use of particular categories of data.

Aggregate Data. The United States Bureau of the Census is, of course, the largest and most important data collection agency of the nation. The Bureau's numerous and massive data products and activities make it a central and basic resource for social scientific inquiry, although, and as is discussed in greater detail below, the very magnitude of these activities present obstacles to effective social scientific use. The decennial Censuses of Population and Housing--quinquennial beginning in 1985--constitute incomparably the richest sources of systematic information bearing upon the characteristics and conditions of the national populations and upon the communities, jurisdictions, civil units and geographical areas of the nation. An attempt to summarize the content of the 1970 Censuses of Population and Housing--the most extensive and best executed decennial censuses to date--would be redundant here. Although these data are initially collected at the individual level, they are most commonly made available and analyzed in aggregate form as the numerous attributes of states, counties, minor civil divisions and smaller units of aggregation. To the data from the Censuses of Population and Housing can be added data from the quinquennial Census of Government (discussed below) and the various economic censuses as well. The latter include the Census of Manufacturing

and Agriculture, which are also conducted on a quinquennial basis and provide detailed information on levels and types of employment, production of various types, and establishments and their characteristics. Taken together these sources provide a detailed profile of the communities of the nation.

Release of virtually the entire 1970 Census data in computer-readable form constituted a major Bureau innovation of great benefit to the social sciences. Data processing equipment was employed in the conduct of both the 1950 and 1960 decennial censuses, as well as the interim censuses of these decades. Only limited and selected computer-readable data files--primarily internal working files which provided the basis for various Bureau publications--were made available prior to the release of the 1970 data. While release of the 1970 data in computer-readable form constituted a major advance, this action also presented a major challenge to social scientists who sought access to the data. In the original format in which they were released, the data were recorded on over 2000 reels of magnetic tape, organized in a complex series of six "counts," and recorded in a technically idiosyncratic format. The mode of release was such that potential users were forced, as suggested above, to "over purchase" in order to acquire the specific data required by a research design and then were faced after purchase with a significant reprocessing task before the data could be analyzed. It was this situation, of course, that led to the development of

the various intermediary services referred to above.

Since the release of the 1970 data, a growing portion of the Bureau's subsequent data products have been released in computer-readable form. Reflecting this advance, the Bureau's official catalogue is now divided into two sections, one for publications and the other for computer-readable files and special tabulations. Moreover, the technical quality and the ease of use of the Bureau's computer-readable data products have steadily improved since the release of the 1970 data. The Bureau has also invested substantial planning and effort looking toward release of the 1980 computer-readable data. Extensive consultation with social scientists and other groups has been carried out with the intent to improve access to the 1980 data, and it is likely that the computer-readable version of the 1980 data will be more readily available in significantly more usable form than was the case in 1970. Even so, it is likely that intermediary services will again be required to provide effective access to the 1980 data, if only to serve the "buyers' cooperative" purposes alluded to above.

The data made available from the Censuses of Population and Housing include the basic information on the age, race and sex distributions of the entire population, as well as selected information on education, income, occupation, and nativity obtained on a sample basis. These data are always available at the state, county, and minor civil division level. Selected further tabulations are available for census tracts, block groups, and enumeration

districts for urbanized areas, which of course include non-metropolitan as well as metropolitan areas. Data for these small units can often be further aggregated to particular geopolitical units such as suburbs or neighborhoods which may be of greater interest to a researcher.

The combination of the 1970 and 1980 population and housing data, along with materials from the other interim censuses of the decade of the 1970s, will be an unparalleled computer-readable data resource for the study of community change and development. This resource, moreover, can be extended in a number of important ways. The Current Population Surveys conducted monthly by the Bureau during the decade provide a basis for reliable annual estimates of population change during the decade. Major bodies of computer-readable data for earlier years are also readily available. The data published in the County and City Data Books for 1952, 1956, 1962, 1967 and 1972 are available from the Bureau in computer-readable form, and in reprocessed and somewhat more usable form from the Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research. The data from the 1977 volume are expected shortly. The Data Books combine data from the Censuses of Population, Housing, Governments and Manufacturing and provide easily manageable data aggregated to the levels of states, counties, cities and standard metropolitan statistical areas (counties and states only for 1952).

The Inter-university Consortium for Political and Social Research has also augmented these resources by converting to computer-readable form substantial arrays of state and county level

social, demographic and economic data from the published reports of the decennial and other censuses conducted between 1940 and 1970, as well as earlier censuses going back to the first, conducted in 1790. To these materials can be added computer-readable county-level returns for elections to the offices of President, Governor, and United States Senator and Representative beginning with the first national election, held in 1788, through the election of 1976, which have also been collected, processed and disseminated by the Consortium. The election returns include the vote for all candidates and parties and can be readily combined with the Consortium files of social, demographic and economic data. Beginning in 1968, this collection of election materials was expanded to include returns, also at the county-level, for elections to one other major state office in addition to governor and records of the popular vote on all state-wide referenda, initiatives and constitutional amendments submitted to the electorate. These data provide the basic measures of the political behavior of the population in a variety of urban settings. In this connection still another more specialized data collection included in the Consortium's holdings can be noted, the computer-readable data from the National Council of Churches of Christ in the United States conducted in 1952 and 1972. These data fill an important data gap since the federal government ceased collecting such information. These data supplement the United States Censuses of Religion (1906, 1916, 1926, and 1936), which provide basic information at the county-level on religious affiliation for the

entire nation.

In short, very extensive bodies of data are available at various levels of aggregation in usable computer-readable form that are of major value for systematic and larger scale investigation of basic demographic change and development since World War II. For the more historically inclined, available data will also support investigation of developmental patterns across earlier years back to the founding of the nation, although the data for earlier years are much more limited than those for the recent period. In general, aggregate data pertinent to the study of community life and development are most consistently available for counties. Particularly in the case of the census files, however, data can usually be obtained for minor civil divisions and other sub-county units.

Another area in which there are substantial aggregate data resources available includes the compilation of a variety of social indicators. These data include measures of the general well-being of the population, and they are often further subdivided into measures of subjective and objective well-being. Some of the so-called subjective measures of perceptions of the quality of life are discussed below under individual-level data. Examples of the variety of measures of objective well-being include data on the basic nativity and mortality statistics of the population. These vital statistics are available in detail from standard administrative records such as the approximately 2,000,000 death certificates which are filed in the United States each year with the National Center for Health

Statistics (NCHS). However, they are much more commonly made available for analysis in the form of aggregated data such as state, county, and city-level statistics on the distributions of deaths by age, race, sex, and cause. Information on schooling and special program opportunities are made available on a similar basis by the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES), as well as special tabulations of age groups by race and sex of the population for school districts.

Even a survey as cursory as this suggests, then, the numerous extensive bodies of computer-readable aggregate data that are available to support the investigation of community processes and development. The available data bear upon demographic characteristics, social processes, income, occupation, health, mortality, productivity, political behavior, education and social service facilities to mention but a few attributes. Moreover, the available data extend to considerable historical depth. The level of aggregation may not be in every case ideal. Even so, opportunities for examination of communities of all descriptions and sizes are abundant.

Administrative Records. Records of the conduct of government, of the provision of governmental programs and facilities, of participation in those programs, and of the extraction and consumption of resources are of obvious importance to the study of community processes and development. In the United States, however, the multilayered nature of government and the multiplicity

of overlapping jurisdictions make governmental and administrative data obstreperous in the extreme, and onerous indeed to collect and employ for the purposes of social scientific inquiry. As we have noted, moreover, despite their relevance to the life of the nation and to processes of social and economic change, the state and local governments of the nation constitute, at best, indifferent sources of systematic data should the social scientist attempt to collect them on his own. The thought of collecting data for the numerous state and local governmental agencies of the nation is depressing, indeed. There are several areas--fortunately, from the standpoint of the social scientist--where the federal government has intervened and now systematically collects extensive data on the operations and activities of state and local governments. Much of the data for very recent years is available to social scientists in computer-readable form and additional systematic information for earlier years is to be found in published sources which could be automated if needed. As in the case of other categories of data, it is only possible to indicate here a few of the major sources.

The quinquennial Censuses of Government conducted by the Bureau of the Census constitute the basic source of information on governmental operations. The first regular Census of Governments was conducted in 1957 in accordance with an Act of Congress approved in 1950, and the data collected in that year through 1967 are primarily available in Bureau publications, although segments of the data for these years are also incorporated in the computer files

on which the City and County Data Books are based as well as in other computer-readable collections prepared by the ICPSR. Beginning with the census of 1972 the data were made available in their entirety in computer-readable form. The combined files for the 1972 census amount to over 9,000,000 punched card equivalents and record data for approximately 70,000 state and local governmental units.

The data available in the Census of Governments are organized to cover the broad area of public employment, taxable property values, and governmental finances, including both revenue and expenditures. There is also a guide to governmental organizations which is indispensable to an understanding of the interrelationships between the various levels of government which are included in the census. Data are available for states, counties, Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA's), municipalities and townships, school districts, and other special districts.

Moreover, the Censuses of Government are supplemented by the Annual Surveys of Government, an extension of the previous annual compendium of government finance series which preceded the formal census. The annual survey provides similar information on government finance and employment in a number of public sectors for the fifty states and for a sample of approximately 16,000 local governments. The sample is stratified by type of government and magnitude of expenditures, and cities of 25,000 population or greater are included with certainty.

Thus the survey provides extensive data on larger municipalities but also provides data for a representative sample of smaller units.

Beginning in 1973, the data from the surveys have been made available in computer-readable form and are available from the ICPSR as well as the Bureau of the Census.

While the Censuses of Government and the Annual Survey of Governments are basic sources of information on state and local governmental operations, several other major data collections require mention. The Office of Revenue Sharing of the Department of the Treasury now releases annual data since 1972 on taxation and income for state and local governments and on payments to these jurisdictions provided for under revenue sharing legislation. This information, although limited, is important because the need for current per capita income estimates requires the annual estimates of small area populations be made. Data on health facilities--hospitals, nursing homes, clinics, and medical personnel--are available on a periodic basis beginning in 1973 for the entire nation from the National Center for Health Statistics (NCHS). These data are available for 1976 as well in their most current form. This Center also makes available data on mortality, nativity, and vital statistics on an annual basis, beginning in 1968. Information on schools, their capacity, number of students and teachers, expenditures, and nature of programs can be obtained form the National Center for Educational Statistics (NCES). These data include special tabulations from the 1970 Census of Population on a school district basis, as well as information on schools and teachers (manpower and facilities), including data on specific programmatic offerings supported under various Titles of

federal legislation. The Law Enforcement Assistance Administration also collects and makes available in machine-readable form data on employment, expenditures, and facilities by state and local governments in the area of criminal justice. The data are available on an annual basis beginning in 1971, and they are a direct analog to the regular Census of Governments data as they are collected by the same division of the Bureau of the Census.

Another special collection of data files relating to metropolitan areas are those developed under four research projects supported by the RANN Division of the National Science Foundation in the area of the organization of public service delivery systems. The four projects cover the service delivery areas of fire protection, public health, police protection, and solid waste management. Each of the projects began in a common set of units; namely all SMSA's of less than 1,500,000 population and which were located entirely within a single state. Data were collected in samples of SMSA's for all of the local geopolitical units in each SMSA as well as for each of the administrative jurisdictions or agencies in the service delivery areas. As a result, information is available for substantial numbers of smaller communities and suburbs which surround the central cities of the SMSA's. Data were collected in the broad areas of the level and quality of the services, the legal structure governing provision of the services, organizational arrangements between jurisdictions in the same SMSA for the provision of services, manpower levels, and expenditure levels. These data are available from the ICPSR Archive.

We have mentioned here only a few major data collections and sources of data bearing upon the conduct and operations of state and local governments. These data are available for specific governmental agencies and jurisdictions and can be linked in many cases to the various collections of aggregated data referred to above. Although these data are not, in general, available for extended time periods, they provide an important means to explore the impact and changing role of government in community life.

Individual-Level Data. Since the 1950s, sample survey research has been a mainstay of social scientific inquiry. The number of surveys conducted by academic researchers, governments and commercial organizations is legion; and the data collected in this fashion touch upon virtually all aspects of life in the United States. Much of this data has been preserved by the data organizations listed above and are readily available to researchers. Moreover, a variety of large collections of individual data, such as the Public Use Samples from the 1970 Census are available from federal agencies and from various intermediary services. Data of this sort, as a general rule, do not allow investigation of specific communities and jurisdictions. On the other hand, such information as the characteristics of the place of residence of the individuals for whom data is recorded in these collections is consistently given. Thus these data provide a means to examine, compare, and contrast the attitudes, behavior, conditions and way of life of the populations of diverse areas. Once again only a few of these collections can be noted with

particular emphasis upon those that provide data for extended temporal periods.

Again the federal government, primarily through the data collection programs of the Bureau of the Census, is the source of major collections of microdata files of this sort. The standard data file routinely made available heretofore has been the Annual Demographic File prepared from the March supplement to the Current Population Survey (CPS). The CPS is an ongoing monthly survey conducted by the Bureau of the Census in approximately 40,000 households. The basic CPS instrument includes information on age, race, sex, relationship, education, occupation, and labor force status for persons 14 years of age and over. The March supplement contains additional questions which obtain information about income, mobility, and marital history; and the entire set of data is obtained for children who are under 14. The processing of the Annual Demographic File includes the generation of household and family summary data records as well; and these annual data files thereby become the best source of current estimates of the characteristics of the national population. Copies of machine-readable data files from the Annual Demographic File are currently available for the period beginning in 1968. While individual urban areas cannot be identified, it is possible to use these data to analyze the status of or change in the characteristics of the population residing in a variety of urban settings.

The only other monthly supplements to the CPS which were routinely made available in the past included the November Voting Supplements which were made available for 1972 and 1974. These surveys were used to generate

estimates of voter participation in the general elections held in those years. The Bureau has recently announced that November Voting Supplements will be made available for 1968, 1970, and 1976. The Bureau announced at the same time that all of the other monthly supplements to the CPS will now be made available routinely in a standardized form. For 1977, this means that data will now be made available for Food Stamp Recipiency (April and August), Multiple Job Holding, Premium Pay, and Job Search of the Employed (May), Birth Expectations, Fertility and Child Care (June), Immunization (September), School Enrollment (October), and Farm Wage Workers (December). Other special supplements which will become available include the Survey of Languages (1976), Smoking Habits (August 1968), and Job Tenure and Occupational Mobility (1973).

Three very large special surveys conducted by the Bureau of the Census for other federal agencies have also recently come into the public domain in readily-usable computer-readable form. By far the largest of these is the ongoing data collection called the National Crime Surveys which are conducted for the Law Enforcement Assistance Administration. This complex series of monthly surveys was initiated in 1972 to ascertain levels of a wide variety of reported and unreported crimes. The national surveys can be used to generate estimates of victimization by type of residential area, while a secondary set of 39 surveys can be used to measure levels of victimization in 26 cities (in 13 of which two surveys were conducted). Information from literally millions of interviews are now available from the ICPSR for each of these series.

A second major project involves the Survey of Income and Education

conducted for the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare in April through July of 1976. The survey was conducted to obtain reliable state-level estimates on the numbers of children in local areas who resided in families with incomes below the federal poverty level. The information was used to facilitate funding under Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act and included questions on school enrollment, disability, health insurance, bilingualism, food stamp recipiency, assets, and housing costs, as well as the basic CPS items. The survey include information from a total of approximately 158,500 households.

Finally, the Bureau has also recently announced the release of data from a special travel-to-work survey added to the Annual Housing Survey (AHS). This supplement was sponsored by the Department of Transportation to obtain data on the commuting patterns of almost 13 million workers in 21 metropolitan areas. The AHS consists of two parts: a national sample of approximately 75,000 households and 21 separate SMSA samples of from 5,000 to 15,000 households each year. A total of 60 SMSA's are surveyed over a three-year period. The data which have just been released are for the first group of 21 SMSA's which were surveyed from April 1974 to March 1976. The Bureau is making available microdata tapes providing records for unidentified individual commuters, including travel-to-work information as well as personal characteristics, as well as data files of tract-to-tract origin/destination information within each SMSA.

The Bureau of the Census is not the only purveyor of data files of the magnitude of those described above. The National Longitudinal Surveys of Labor Market Experience were begun in 1966 by Herbert S. Parnes of the

Center for Human Resource Research at the Ohio State University under contract to the Department of Labor. The surveys were designed primarily to analyze the sources of variation in the labor market behavior and experience of four age-sex cohorts of the United States population. The four cohorts originally defined in the study were mature men (45 to 59 years of age) , mature women (30 to 44 years of age), and young men and young women (each 14 to 24 years of age). Each cohort has been interviewed at least once every two years since the inception of the study, and the original sample size for each group was composed of 1,500 blacks and 3,500 whites. The major topics which were generally covered in each survey included labor market experience; socioeconomic and human capital, including education, health, training, marital status and family characteristics, job attitudes, retirement plans, and occupational aspirations and expectations; and other contextual information about the place in which the respondent resides, including size of the labor force, unemployment rates, and the demand for labor.

The Social Security Administration is another federal agency which is the source of extensive files of microdata. In particular, data from the Longitudinal Retirement History Survey have recently been made available, and they provide a unique opportunity to investigate the transition from the last years of employment to retirement. Begun in 1968, the collection involves the biennial survey of a national sample of workers drawn from the administrative records of the Social Security Administration. In addition to obtaining information from the individuals about their occupation status and plans for retirement, information

from employers' records as well as benefit payments from the Social Security system are also merged into the public use data files. This is an ongoing data collection program from which it can be expected that additional data files will be made available after they have been analyzed by the staff in the Office of Research and Statistics.

All of these large individual-level data files have in common the identification of size and type of place of residence of the respondents which permits a variety of analyses comparing persons from nonmetropolitan communities with those from other places. Because the basic data are available at the individual level, the researcher is free to tabulate and aggregate the information in virtually limitless numbers of ways. It is important to note, however, that all of the data files described above have such large dimensions, in terms of either or both the number of variables and units of analysis, that there is no occasion for anything even remotely approaching casual analysis. Special software is often required to treat complex physical storage formats, and the large arrays of data imply that the costs for even trivial setup errors can be enormous. This is one area in which care and caution are the by words.

One area in which these large, agency-funded data collection projects are sometimes deficient is in their lack of information on the attitudes and opinions of the samples of the population which they study. It is not necessary to discuss in detail here why this inevitably is so; suffice it to say that other data sources must be sought for this type of information. By and large this means that researchers must utilize surveys conducted by individual researchers through academic institutions or

through commerical organizations. These data are again amenable to analysis by groups of respondents who can be characterized by their place or type of residence, among other features. But it is important to note that the sample size for these surveys are considerably smaller than those described above, and hence the estimates which are generated from their analysis are neither as precise nor can they be as finely drawn for other population subgroups. The number of surveys of this sort are virtually infinite; for our present purposes, the discussion will be limited to major ongoing data collection efforts which provide the analyst with the opportunity to compare attitudes and opinions over time, even if only for separate cross-sections of the population.

Data of this sort are available for the greatest span of time from the national surveys conducted by the American Institute for Public Opinion (The Gallup Organization). Dating back to 1936, data are available from hundreds of AIPO omnibus surveys through the Roper Center. The Roper Center maintains a computer-readable item index which indicates the timing and frequency with which various survey questions were asked. Because of the fact that the standard Gallup questionnaire is relatively short and is often composed of a number of timely but sometimes theoretically unrelated items, most analysis of this sort is limited to the comparison of cross-sectional distributions of opinions at multiple points in time. A significant exception, however, are the Gallup pre - and post-election surveys; and the Roper Center has developed a data package which consists of information from these surveys dating back to 1936. This is a valuable and unique resource for student of public opinion and political behavior since the New Deal.

A comparable set of surveys covering the period since 1952 are the biennial studies of the American electorate conducted formerly by the Survey Research Center, and now by the Center for Political Studies at The University of Michigan. Involving pre and post-election panels in the presidential election years and post-election studies otherwise, each of the surveys contains information from a comprehensive interview lasting approximately ninety minutes. The contents of the surveys typically include information on registration and voting as well as other forms of political behavior, opinions about current events and issues, and attitudes toward government, the political system, and candidates and parties. At two points during the series--from 1958 to 1960 and 1972 to 1976--the surveys incorporated panel studies across election years as well as within. These data can be obtained from the archive of the ICPSR.

The third major collection of individual-level data is available from the annual General Social Surveys conducted since 1972 by the National Opinion Research Center. These surveys are administered to samples of national cross-sections of the population aged 18 and over. Almost all of the individual items have appeared in previous surveys, some dating back to 1945, which were originally conducted by a variety of academic and commercial survey organizations. The content of the surveys includes information on the family, race relations, social control, civil liberties, attitudes towards sex and sexual materials, and morals. The data are therefore of greater interest to a broad range of social scientists.

These surveys have the common trait of national samples of adults who can be identified by size and type of place of residence. This enables the analyst to investigate the attitudes and opinions who have this general trait in common but for whom the identification or representation of a specific community is not possible. By and large there are relatively few collections of individual-level data for clearly identified communities which would enable comparisons between nonmetropolitan areas or within the same area over time. It would of course, be impossible to even attempt to identify and describe all of the surveys which were conducted one time in one place, a task which is certainly outside of the scope of the present paper.

There are two exceptions to this general state of affairs which are worthy of mention, however. One of these is the series of Citizen Attitude Surveys conducted in ten Urban Observatory Program cities in 1968. The data is available for rather large urban areas, but it is worth mention because it is an example of the use of the same survey instrument in ten separate and identifiable geographic locations. The survey emphasized citizen attitudes toward local governmental services and opinions about local problems in the areas of schooling, housing, public transportation, drugs, law and order, and taxes. These data are available from the ICPSR.

The second major collection of surveys include information obtained from the Permanent Community Sample Project developed by Peter Rossi, Robert L. Crain, James J. Vanecko, and Matthew J. Crensen at the National Opinion Research Center. The project began in the 1960's with the selection

of a sample of 51 American communities based upon their regional location and population size. The cities, which were selected represented twenty-two states and had populations between 50,000 and 750,000. Typical of the research projects conducted using this frame is Terry N. Clark's Comparative Study of Community Decision-making, in which intensive interviews were conducted with local elites. The information on community leadership and patterns of influence was combined with various aggregate data from the Bureau of the Census and the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Further information about collection of studies conducted using the Permanent Community Sample can be obtained by contacting the Data Librarian at the National Opinion Research Center.

CONCLUSIONS

This paper has reviewed the availability of computer-readable data resources for the study of nonmetropolitan community growth and development in the United States. While a complete enumeration of agencies and organizations which are sources for these materials is impossible, an attempt was made to describe the major national organizations and institutions which supply such data and to discuss the range of local service agencies which can often facilitate access to them.

The discussion of specific data resources employed a typology of aggregate data, administrative records, and individual-level data to illustrate the range and variety of available materials. Again it is impossible to account for every available data file, and we have resorted to highlighting major collections and broad classes of data. The purpose

of this review has been to draw attention to the very substantial empirical resources which are available to social scientists interested in research on nonmetropolitan communities.

APPENDIX
Archival Sources for Computer-Readable Data on Nonmetropolitan Communities in the United States and Canada

Director
BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES LABORATORY
University of Cincinnati
Cincinnati, Ohio 45221

CENTER FOR QUANTITATIVE STUDIES IN SOCIAL SCIENCE
117 Savery Hall
DK-45
University of Wisconsin
Madison, Wisconsin 53706

Executive Director
DATA CLEARINGHOUSE FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCES
151 Slater St.
Ottawa, Ontario, Canada K1P 5N1

Director
DATA LIBRARY
Computing Centre
University of British Columbia
2075 Wesbrook Place
Vancouver, British Columbia
Canada V6T 1W5

Data Librarian
DATA LIBRARY
Survey Research Center
University of California
Berkeley, California 94720

Director
DATA USER SERVICES DIVISION
U.S. Bureau of the Census
Washington, D.C. 20233

Librarian
DUALABS, INC.
Information Documentation Center
1601 N. Kent, Suite 900
Arlington, Virginia 22209

Director
INSTITUTE FOR BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH
Data Bank
York University
4700 Keele Street
Donsview, Ontario
Canada

Executive Director
INTER-UNIVERSITY CONSORTIUM FOR POLIITCAL AND SOCIAL RESEARCH
P.O. Box 1248
Ann Arbor, Michigan 48106

NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE
Reference Service
Machine-Readable Archives Division (NNR)
Washington, D.C 20408

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS
Office of Education
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Washington, D.C. 20202

NATIONAL CENTER FOR HEALTH STATISTICS
Scientific and Technical Information Branch
Department of Health, Education, and Welfare
Hyattsville, Maryland 20782

Data Librarian
NATIONAL OPINION RESEARCH CENTER
University of Chicago
6030 South Ellis Avenue
Chicago, Illinois 60637

Director
NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY INFORMATION CENTER
Vogelback Computing Center
Northwestern University
Evanston, Illinois 60201

POLITICAL SCIENCE DATA ARCHIVE
Department of Political Science
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48823

POLITICAL SCIENCE LABORATORY AND
DATA ARCHIVE
Department of Political Science
248 Woodburn Hall
Indiana University
Bloomington, Indiana 47401

PUBLIC ARCHIVES CANADA
Machine Readable Archives
295 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada, K1A ON3

ROPER CENTER, INC.
Archival Development Activities:
Box U-164R
University of Connecticut
Storrs, Connecticut 06288
User Services Activities:
38 Mansfield Street
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

SOCIAL SCIENCE COMPUTER RESEARCH
INSTITUTE
621 Mervis Hall
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15260

SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA ARCHIVE
Laboratory for Political Research
321A Schaeffer Hall
University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa 52242

SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA ARCHIVE
Social Science Library
Yale University
Box 1958 Yale Station
New Haven, Connecitcut 06520

SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA ARCHIVES
Survey Research Laboratory
414 David Kinley Hall
University of Illinois
Urbana, Illinos 61801

Director
SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA ARCHIVES
Department of Sociology and
Anthropology
Carleton University
Colonel By Drive
Ottawa, Ontario
Canada K1S 5B6

Director
SOCIAL SCIENCE DATA CENTER
University of Connecticut
Storrs, Connecticut 06208

Director
LOUIS HARRIS DATA CENTER
University of North Carolina
Room 10, Manning Hall
Chapel Hill, North Carolina 27514

Director
SOCIAL SCIENCE USER SERVICE
Princeton University Computer Center
87 Prospect Avenue
Princeton, New Jersey 08540

Director
STATE DATA PROGRAM
460 Stephens Hall
University of California
Berkeley, California 94720

Director
STATE GOVERNMENT DATA BASE
Council of State Governments
Iron Works Pike
Lexington, Kentucky 40578